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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
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0002

April 25, 1990

TO: Mineral File

FROM: Holland Shepherd *HSS*

RE: Site Inspection, Hobo #1 Mine, Delbert Burr and Associates, S/019/023, Grand County, Utah

A visit was made to the Hobo #1 mine site on April 24, 1990. I was accompanied by Mr. Elmer Duncan of the BLM, Grand Resource Office. Mr. Duncan is the Minerals Supervisor and filling in for Sal Venticinque who is away on training currently. The reason for the visit was to evaluate a situation where a mine operation has been developing a site without the proper permits or notifications to the state and the BLM. The BLM and the State were both notified of the situation by outside parties.

The mine site is in the Delores Triangle area and is located approximately at Township 23 South, Range 25 East, Section 17. The site is located on the north side of the Delores River, which is all BLM ownership. Directly across from the site, on the south side of the river is a large section of private land. The private land is owned by the Wheatons and the area is called the Entrada Ranch, (used to be called the Schuller Ranch). The mine is a placer operation and is currently active. The mine operation is being run by a Mr. Delbert Burr who's associates are: Mr. Jim Weise and Mr. Ken Westwood.

Apparently, the operator noticed the BLM in 1987 concerning the development of this site. A notice was never made to the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining. Since the operator's original notice, which was approved as a Plan of Operation, by the BLM, some major changes have been made to that plan, that have not been updated by the operator. The operation was to originally comprise about 2 - 3 acres; however, the operation is much larger than that and consists of close to 5 acres, if not more. I performed a very quick acreage evaluation at the site, and I came up with approximately 3.8 - 4 acres of disturbance. My feeling is that there is probably more acres of disturbance. I did not have time to evaluate the area as I should have, due to a thunder storm that was moving into the area at the time and having a direct relationship on the volume of water flowing in the Delores River, which I had to ford on my return to Moab.

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The actual area of disturbance is something that needs to be defined at a date in the not too distant future.

The operator has installed several small ponds on the site, for the purpose of processing the gold ore. Also, the operator has expanded the site to accommodate buildings and pads for storage material.

The road question is one that has been very controversial at this site, and has precipitated a lot of contention between the county, the private land owner, the mine operator, and the BLM. Apparently, the mine operator originally tried to gain access to the site through private land. The private land owner was not happy with the mine operator using his property to access the site and refused such access. The mine operator then requested that the county designate that access across private ground as county road, as it had been used in the past. The county, however, refused to do this leaving the operator with having to find another access point to reach the mine site. Access through the private property would have been more convenient and faster for the operator. The operator now has to travel along county and BLM roads in an area of a northern portion of the Delores into Colorado, then back into Utah to get back and forth from the mine site. The operator wanted to eliminate this long travel by constructing a crossing at the Delores River, going across this private ground and eventually accessing Highway 298 at the point of Dewey Bridge, along the Colorado River. Now the operator is looking at another alternative in constructing a crossing further north across the Delores River, which would connect onto BLM land rather than private land. If done, this would require some major permitting via the Army Corp of Engineers and Utah Water Rights.

This, however, is creating problems with approval from the BLM and the fact that the operator would have to impact some rather sensitive riparian zones along the Delores River, and then construct a crossing of some type within the Delores River itself. The road that the operator currently uses has been designated a county road, recently, up to the point of the mine site itself. The road, at one time, a two-track, eight-foot wide road, had been used for years by the public. It was at one time designated a county road. The county has assumed responsibility for this road up to the point of the mine site and has received an approval from the BLM for right-of-way. Approval for right-of-way through a section of state land for this road is still pending. Because the road has already been reconstructed, so to speak, but before official approval, going from an eight-foot wide, two-track to a 20 - 30 foot wide haul road. The BLM will require that the county, in this case, reclaim the outside portions of the road when the operator is no longer going to use the road. The operator, in this situation, was able to get county



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support in assuming the responsibility for an access road to an independent mining site. This road may never be developed further than the mine site itself. I plan to contact Mr. David Warner of Grand County Road District to gain answers to some of these questions.

We spoke to two individuals at the site, who were working for the operator. One of these individuals is Mr. Arlan Spurry, the other individual didn't seem too enthusiastic about giving me his name. Elmer Duncan and I spoke with these two men for awhile concerning the type of operation that was being run on the site and plans that the operator might have for the site in the future. Apparently, there had been a great deal of debris left over from the previous mine operator, Mr. Mike Jones. This new operator has indicated they cleaned up a great amount, with a lot of effort. According to Mr. Duncan, this is probably true because he had seen or looked at pictures of the site in the past and it was pretty junky. Mr. Duncan did indicate to me that what was going on onsite, that we saw during our inspection, was a lot of extra impacts to the site that had not been approved in the earlier plan approval.

In regard to the ponds that the operator has constructed at the Hobo Mine site, no notification has been made to the Department of Health, Bureau of Water Pollution Control, regarding these ponds. Staff at Water Pollution Control have indicated to me, in the past, that such ponds need to have construction permits approved by Water Pollution Control before any such use of these facilities can be made. Since these ponds are already in place, this will present a problem in getting them permitted and no doubt constructed properly. The ponds are located rather close to the northern bank of the Delores River which can present a discharge problem or erosion problem if a large enough rainfall event, were to impact the site. The ponds now are not made to discharge, the intention is they will not discharge; the water will be recirculated within the ponds. However, if a large enough event were to impact the site, it is doubtful whether the ponds that have been constructed will be able to contain a large quantity of runoff. The stability of the pond embankments are questionable themselves. If a large rainfall event were to impact the site, it is quite possible that these pond embankments would fail, thereby causing a silt contamination problem to the Delores River.

Also, a lot of loose debris, fill material, has been placed along the Delores River as a result of the construction of the ponds and pits at this mine operation. In the original Plan of Operation, the operator committed to a 20 foot buffer zone, that would not be impacted to the mining operation between the Delores River and the operation itself. This 20 foot buffer zone has not been kept.



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In regard to future developments at this site, I discussed what steps need to be taken with the BLM. We have decided that the operator needs to be contacted again, very soon, regarding an update of the current Mine and Reclamation Plan. The staff of the BLM intend to visit this site again to get a better scope of the operation and the access road from the north, which we were not able to evaluate during this last visit. Questions which need to be answered by the operator are: 1) what is the actual disturbed acreage at the site; 2) what sort of future road construction will take place at the site; 3) what sort of permits will have to developed for this road construction in regard to county and the Delores River BLM; 4) what sort of bonding requirements, if any, are we going to require at this site; 5) how is the operator going to address the question of permitting those processing ponds with the Bureau of Water Pollution Control.

I intend to put a letter together, addressed to the operator, explaining some of the items mentioned above. The letter will also be copied to the Bureau of Land Management.

The site is located on BLM land that has been designated as wild and scenic river territory. Because of this designation, the plan, even though it is under 5 acres, has been designated as a Plan rather than a Notice, by the BLM. Although it has been designated as such, it was not initially evaluated by the BLM in as in-depth manner as most plans are.

jb  
cc: Lowell Braxton  
Wayne Hedberg  
WMN/1-4





3/01/023 Holo #1

4-24-90

New whole site west





5/019/023

4-24-90

View West

Across Site of Delores Power

Private Ground Other side



Hoko # 1

5/019/023

4-24-90

view south after disturbance

